

AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE "FOUR FOLD" IDEA

*Supplementary to the report of the International Sunday School Association Section of the
Commission on a Standard Program of Boys' Work in America*

1. It is the purpose of this paper to present in chronological form and from the purely historical viewpoint the development of the principle of religious education now generally known as "The Four Fold Idea." All pretense at evaluation of existing four fold or quasi-four fold programs of activities is disavowed. It is expected that a careful study, from the Sunday School point of view, of all existing material for the construction of four fold programs will soon be made by competent investigators and the results made available through the usual channels.

2. In the preparation of this statement, the writer has had access to a mass of historical data, including many original papers and records. The files of "American Youth" (the official organ of the Boys' Work Department of International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations) have been carefully examined. For earlier records, the files of "Association Boys," predecessor of "American Youth," have been searched. The addresses before the Pennsylvania institutes for workers with boys, as reported in "Building Boyhood," and "Reaching the Boys of an Entire Community," has been found of value in many ways. The printed literature of "The Order of the Triangle" and of Canadian National Advisory Committee for Cooperation in Boys' Work, together with the Canadian Standard Efficiency Tests and many newspaper and magazine articles relative thereto, have been studied. Mr. John L. Alexander has very kindly allowed access to his personal files, by which courtesy much correspondence and many original documents of historic value in this connection have been available. In the absence overseas of Mr. Taylor Statten, his representative, Mr. P. R. Hayward has furnished copies of the most recent Canadian literature and valuable magazine articles. The writer has had the privilege of having small part in the movement since July, 1914, and is personally familiar with certain phases of the growth of the movement since that date. All of these sources have been freely drawn upon, with the purpose of bringing together in brief compass and in chronological order, the essential facts of the development of the Four Fold Idea.

3. At the outset, it will be illuminating to observe the four men who have figured largely in the movement. These men are Messrs. John L. Alexander, Wallace Forgie, Harvey L. Smith and Taylor Statten. Because of the fact that their official relationships have had important bearing upon the growth of the Four Fold plan, there follows a sort of "Who's Who" as to each of these four men.

JOHN L. ALEXANDER, General Secretary Young Men's Christian Association, Oil City and Spring Forge, Pa.; Secretary for Boys' Work, Young Men's Christian Association, Philadelphia; Executive Secretary, Boy Scouts of America; Boys' Work Expert, Men and Religious Forward Movement, and Superintendent Young People's (Secondary) Division, International Sunday School Association.

WALLACE FORGIE, Boys' Work Secretary, Young Men's Christian Associations of Ottawa, Quebec, and of Toronto, Ontario; Territorial Secretary for Quebec and Ontario.

HARVEY L. SMITH, Boys' Work Secretary, Young Men's Christian Associations of Galveston, Texas; New Haven, Connecticut, and Belford Branch, Brooklyn, N. Y.

TAYLOR STATTEN, Boys' Work Secretary, Young Men's Christian Association, Toronto (Ontario) Central; Territorial Boys' Work Secretary for Ontario and Quebec, and Boys' Work Secretary, National Council of Young Men's Christian Associations of Canada.

4. In 1902, Mr. Alexander was general secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association, at Oil City, Pa. He there began a series of experiments, using the natural "gang" groupings of boys, and undertaking to develop methods of working through the group towards the all-round development of the individual. He continued this experimentation in Spring Grove, Pa., beginning in 1903, and using there "The Knights of King Arthur" and "The Pilgrim Fraternity." Mr. Alexander's records show that during his incumbency at Spring Grove, he first developed the "U and I Club," which was afterwards used with great success at Philadelphia. The fundamental nature of the group plan thus then developing, is described by Mr. Alexander in "Reaching the Boys of an Entire Community," page 165.

5. In 1905, in Canada, there was begun a sort of general discussion among leaders in Boys' Work, during which it became apparent that there was needed some sort of a program looking to the uniform development of boy life. It had begun to be felt among the Canadian leaders that a lop-sided boyhood—a



specialization on athletics, or scholarship, or religion, at the expense of the other elements of boy-nature—was a thing to be avoided.

As a result of this feeling, certain investigations were made and in the course thereof, the "Tuxis" system, devised by Harvey L. Smith, then at Bedford Branch, Brooklyn, Y. M. C. A., was brought to the attention of the Canadian workers.

6. During 1907 and perhaps earlier, Harvey L. Smith was also conducting experiments along the same general lines along which Mr. Alexander had been working. As a result of his experimentation, Mr. Smith had developed and was then (1907) operating in Brooklyn his "Tuxis" system of tests. This system is fully described and its operation set forth in detail in "Association Boys," 1908, page 12; in "Reaching the Boys of an Entire Community," page 119; and in "Association Boys," 1908, pages 99 and 107.

7. Late in 1907, in Canada, the "Tuxis" system was adopted as the basis for a Canadian boys' work program. A plan of work was used experimentally in Canada and possibly amended and improved upon from year to year, but there seems to have been no formal printed matter at that time nor for some years later. See in this connection "A Challenge to Canadian Manhood for Leadership in Boys' Work," page 3, under the head, "Report of Commission on Leadership." See also, "Religious Education" for April, 1918, page 126.

8. In September, 1908, Mr. Alexander was called to be Associate General Secretary, in Charge of Work for Boys, at Philadelphia Central. Here, his "U and I Club" plan was further developed by the addition of the "Topper Club" and the "Inner Circle," and here, apparently for the first time, is the Four Fold Idea definitely suggested and used. At the Harrisburg (Pa.) institute of boy workers, held in April, 1909, Mr. Alexander explained in detail his Philadelphia plan. On page 125 of "Building Boyhood" (the official report of the Harrisburg institute) appears the following:

"The degrees of the Topper Club, through a test system, aim to build the boy *physically, mentally, spiritually and socially*, at points where he evidences weakness and so to round him out into a symmetrical manhood, whose motto is service."

In "Association Boys" for 1909, page 109, there appears an article by Mr. Alexander, headed "The Plan and Principles of the Work with Boys at Philadelphia Central." At the conclusion of this article, printed in June, 1909, the writer says:

"To do this effectively, is not in a secretary's reach, save as he impels himself and his ideal into the life of other men, who delight to see and help the boy to grow 'in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man'."

So far as a very careful investigation of the records on the entire matter has disclosed, this is the first public mention of the use of Luke 2:52 with a scheme of boys' work. It is safe to say that the Four Fold Plan as it is now known, based on the fifty-second verse of the second chapter of Luke's Gospel, had its inception at Philadelphia Central Young Men's Christian Association, under the leadership of John L. Alexander.

It is interesting to note also, in passing, that at Philadelphia the leaders became impressed with the idea that the then Y. M. C. A. symbol of the triangle did not fully represent the type of work then and there being done. It was felt that the triangle, with its "Mind and Body and Spirit" symbolism, omitted the group or social element. This feeling resulted in an interesting change of emblems, at the Boys' Work Department at Philadelphia Central. This change is described in "Association Boys" for 1911, on page 138.

"It has been lately emphasized in our work among boys that our efforts for the development of boyhood must be of a symmetrical and balanced character. In Philadelphia Central, the emblem of the Association has been changed from the Standard Triangle to the Maltese Cross; from body, mind and spirit, to the physical, mental, religious and social. This evidently was for the purpose of emphasizing the fourfold instead of the threefold man."

9. At the Pennsylvania institute, held at Harrisburg in April, 1909, Mr. Statten was present. (It is evident that the Canadian program then current was based on its edition of the "Tuxis" system, which was not "fourfold" and had no relationship to Luke 2:52.) At that session (see paragraph 8) Mr. Alexander presented his Philadelphia fourfold plan of work. Mr. Statten's interest in the latter plan is evidenced by his subsequent visit to Philadelphia. (See below, paragraph —.)

10. In the summer of 1909, at the meeting of the Boys' Work Secretaries' Association at Silver Bay, the whole matter was under consideration. Information as to the "Tuxis" plan and as to the Philadelphia plan was presented to the Association. The result was the appointment of a Commission, consisting of Mr. Smith, Mr. Alexander and A. A. Jameson, with instruction to report upon a plan for the organization of a National Order, to be used in boys' work departments of the "Y." over the continent. The membership of Messrs. Alexander and Smith upon this Commission is taken to be indicative of the desire of the Association to combine the best elements of both the "Tuxis" and the Philadelphia schemes into one workable plan and program.

11. Pending the investigations of the Commission, the Canadian situation was apparently still in process of development. Mr. Statten, having become familiar with the "U and I Club" and "The Topper Club"

at Harrisburg (see paragraph 9) and being evidently impressed with their value, came to Philadelphia in February of 1910 and spent a week there, in the study of the work Alexander was doing. There are records to indicate that Mr. Statten was put into possession of the entire Philadelphia plan, with everything then in writing on the subject.

12. A little later, (March, 1910), and in appreciation of his treatment at Philadelphia, Mr. Statten furnished to the Philadelphia management a statement of the then effective Toronto Central plan, headed, "Suggestions in Connection with Honor System of Character Development." It is perhaps proper to say that an examination of this plan reveals nothing of the fourfold element and makes no reference—actual or inferential—to the famous text.

13. At Silver Bay, in the summer of 1910, Mr. Wallace Forgie was present. He was then Boys' Work Secretary at Ottawa. During the various sessions of the summer school and of the Boys' Secretaries' Association, Mr. Forgie came into possession of the Philadelphia plan. He was also furnished with the details of the plan and was given all the then available literature thereon. As a return courtesy, Mr. Forgie, in September, 1910, presented to the Philadelphia management a statement of the then current Ottawa plan, headed, "Policy Recommended for Adoption by Boys' Work Council, Ottawa." This plan involved a system of "degrees," using as the emblem variations on the standard "Y" triangle. There is no suggestion of the fourfold nor of the Luke text in this scheme. It is interesting to note Mr. Forgie's annotation on the typed copy: "I find that the Boys' Work Committee, appointed by the Board, have not stuff in them to take up this work, nor is there a man to act as chairman. I am planning to organize council independent of Association."

14. In the meantime, the Commission appointed by the Boys' Secretaries' Association has been about its task. Several meetings were held in the fall of 1910 and early in 1911. A plan of work, known as "The Order of the Mountain," was devised, and in an article published in The Brooklyn Eagle, on May 11, 1910, Mr. Smith made the first public announcement of the plan. For some reason not clear, the Order of the Mountain was never put into general operation. There seems to have been no further publicity given it than the article published in Brooklyn.

15. In 1910 and 1911, Mr. Forgie's Ottawa plan was developed into "The Order of the Triangle." In 1911, Mr. Statten was made Territorial Secretary for Ontario and Quebec and Mr. Forgie came to Toronto Central as Boys' Work Secretary. The printed announcement of the Order carries the name of Mr. Statten as Grand Knight Commander, and of Mr. Forgie as Supreme Secretary-Treasurer. A casual examination of the early literature fails to disclose any of the four fold element in the Order. There is no suggestion of the desirability of a boy's growing "in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." During 1911 and 1912, the Order of the Triangle was promoted by the Canadian Boys' Work Secretaries and had become quite well known and somewhat widely used, when, in the fall of 1912, the Canadian Standard Efficiency Tests were first published.

16. Late in 1911, the Men and Religion movement got under way. John L. Alexander, R. A. Waite and James A. Whitmore were the boy specialists in this movement. The text book used by the Boys' Work section of the movement was "Boy Training," of which Alexander was the editor. This text book and the plans used in the Men and Religion movement were built on the four fold plan and based definitely on Luke 2:52. In February, 1912, an institute of the Movement was held at the City of Buffalo. Mr. Statten was present at the institute and was a member of Mr. Alexander's section.

"Boy Training" is reviewed in "Association Boys" for 1911, at page 224. The psychology of the four fold principle is questioned by the reviewer, as follows:

"There are several papers on what the editor calls 'the four fold needs of the boy.' One is tempted to ask parenthetically, however, why fourfold?"

The reviewer continues to discuss the principle, in an attempt to limit "exact psychology" to "two great constituent elements, that is, mind and body." It is evident that the rank and file of Association Boys' Work Secretaries were not prepared to accept the four fold principle nor to put it into practice.

17. On May first, 1912, Mr. Alexander became superintendent of the Secondary (now Young People's) Division of the International Sunday School Association. He thereby became responsible for the Association's program for boys' work in the Sunday Schools of the continent. He at once began the preparation of a Sunday School policy, based absolutely upon the four fold ideal. His official relation to the Sunday School Associations of Canada brought him into touch with the boys' work of the Young Men's Christian Associations of Canada. Almost immediately, (May 13, 1912), Mr. Statten took up with him the matter of co-operation between the two Associations in Canada, in boys' work. The general idea of co-operation, as urged by Statten, was a sort of control over boys' work by a body composed of representatives of the denominations and of the Young Men's Christian Associations, using the about-to-be-published Canadian Standard Efficiency Tests as the program of local work.

18. The claim has been made (See Religious Education, April, 1918, page 126, and Report of Commission on Leadership, page 2), that the Canadian Standard Efficiency Tests were first published in October,

1912. There are many circumstances which indicate that if published, these tests were for some unknown reason held from circulation until perhaps a year later. So far as can be ascertained, the first public announcement of the content of the tests was made by Mr. Statten in his article in "American Youth" for 1913 (December) page 277. His previous articles (American Youth, 1912, page 92, and American Youth, 1913, page 27) make no reference to the Tests. At the Cornwall, Ontario, older boys' conference, December 27-29, 1912, the conference badge was a sort of reproduction of the emblem later to be used in connection with the Tests. At that conference, Mr. Statten announced that the badge was the beginning of a plan to be called Canadian Standard Efficiency Tests, but at that time no printed matter was available. The statement of policy of Toronto Central Young Men's Christian Association, Boys' Work Department, for 1912-1913, contains no reference to the Tests.

19. Mr. Alexander's first elaborate publications for the Sunday School Association appeared in May of 1913. These were the books, "The Sunday School and the Teens" and "The Boy and the Sunday School." Both were compiled and written on the four fold idea. About the same time appeared the Secondary Division leaflets, issued by the Sunday School Association and based on the same plan. The Sunday School Association's project for the discovery and training of older boy and older girl leaders, known as The International Older Boys' and Older Girls' Camp Conferences, was launched in 1913. But on account of the holding of the World's Sunday School Convention in Zurich, during the summer of 1913, the actual holding of the first of the training camps was delayed until July, 1914, when the first Camp of the Four Fold Life was held.

20. In the fall of 1913, (October and November) Messrs. Alexander and Statten were the leaders of a series of co-operative older boys' conferences in Vancouver, Calgary, Saskatoon and Winnipeg. By that time, the Canadian tests had been published in simple leaflet form, as described by Mr. Statten, in American Youth, 1913, page 277. Mr. Alexander's records reveal the interesting fact that at the Saskatoon conference, he publicly and as a sort of demonstration of method, "chartered" the first boy in Canada to come under the Tests. Another interesting and illuminating fact appears from a letter of Mr. Statten to Mr. Alexander, under date of January 8, 1914, as follows:

"I am sending you by this mail, copies of our scoring tablets. I find that most of the physical tests will have to be revised and our plan is to get a scoring table in such shape that instead of using *these blueprints* we will have a *printed table* that will cover the various weights.

"I am also sending you a couple of dozen copies of the Booklet. I am sorry that this was not attended to earlier."

On the original simple basis, Mr. Alexander had promised the endorsement of the Sunday School Association upon the Canadian program. But in the meantime, it is evident that there had arisen certain difficulties and misunderstandings between the Canadian provincial Sunday School Associations and the National Committee of the Young Men's Christian Associations. An analysis of these difficulties has no proper place in this study. But the net result of these difficulties was the formation, in the late summer or fall of 1914, of the organization known as Canadian National Advisory Committee for Co-operation in Boys' Work. This committee is made up of representatives of the Sunday School Boards of the Anglican, Baptist, Congregational, Evangelical, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, the Sunday School Associations and the National Council of the Y. M. C. A. All conferences for older boys are now held under the direction of this committee and its local subsidiaries. Through it, the Canadian Standard Efficiency Tests were immediately promoted. In October, 1914, the Tests were published in an eighty-page book, edited by Mr. Statten and approved and endorsed by the Advisory Committee.

21. The tests in the elaborate form and controlled by the Advisory Committee did not have the approval of Mr. Alexander. To discuss these objections and their merits would exceed the purpose of this study. While it is understood that the Ontario provincial Sunday School Association and perhaps others have co-operated in the promotion of the Tests, the International Sunday School Association's Secondary (Young People's) Division Committee has never approved the system. The reasons for this absence of approval are expected to be set out at large in another study of the general subject, to which reference is above made. The Committee has worked out and given publicity to its own policy and program of work (See Louisville Statements, issued in 1916) and has participated in the deliberations of the Commission on Standard Program of Boys' Work in America.

22. The work of the Commission is set out in detail in the report of the International Sunday School Association Section of the Commission to the Young People's Committee, made at Buffalo on December 5, 1918. But for convenience of reference, and to complete the story of the growth of the idea, it is thought well to add the following facts: Boys' work secretaries in America had watched with interest the development of the Canadian tests. This interest resulted in the presentation of the Canadian system to the American secretaries in an address at the Culver Boys' Work Assembly, in May, 1913. Following that session, the entire proposition was given some study by American secretaries. Mr. Eugene C. Foster, then Boys' Work Secretary at Detroit, was chairman of a committee which was charged with responsibility for working out a series of tests for use on this side of the Line. This committee rejected the Canadian system and prepared and

used experimentally a series of tests based on the body, mind and spirit ideal. These were issued and used and discussed in 1914 and 1915. The Revised Edition of the booklet appeared under date of October 1, 1915.

But on January 24, 1916, the Boys' Work Department of the International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations issued a call, inviting the Sunday School Association, the Religious Education Association, the Sunday School Council of Evangelical Denominations and the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America to meet with it, to consider the preparation and promotion of a standard program of boys' work. This conference was held in September of 1916. All the invited agencies except the Religious Education Association were represented. The representatives of the Young Men's Christian Association presented for consideration of the conference a proof edition of the American Standard Program for Boys. This program proved to be the Canadian Standard Efficiency Tests, slightly revised. The result of the first session of the conference committee was an agreement that a standard program of boys' work, used in co-operation by the represented bodies, was desirable, but the conference was without authority to go further. Hence, it was determined that each set of representatives should report back to their respective bodies the desirability of the permanent organization of a Commission on Standard Program of Boys' Work and to request the designation of permanent and duly authorized members of such a Commission. Such members were duly designated by each of the five bodies and at a session held in November, 1916, the Commission was permanently organized. But at that time, it appeared that the representatives of the Young Men's Christian Association were not able to surrender control of the so-called American Standard Program for Boys to the Commission, to be used as the basis for a co-operative standard program. Some confusion resulted from this position which has not yet been cleared away.

But certain principles of procedure were agreed upon at the November meeting and two sub-committees were appointed, for the purpose of making certain preliminary investigations along suggested lines. (See the minutes of Commission of Standard Program of Boys' Work in America, November 9-10, 1916.)

When the Commission met for the third Session, in September, 1917, it was announced that a similar investigation was being conducted by the Religious Education Association and it was determined that pending this investigation and a report thereon, the Commission would suspend its own activities. It was also determined that during the interval, any constituent body should have the right to conduct its own experimentation and that the Commission could be reconvened upon the request of any delegation.

The Committee of the Religious Education Association, to which the investigation had been entrusted, met in New York in March, 1918. For reasons not important here, the committee referred the entire matter back to the Religious Education Association for further advice and instruction.

In the meantime, and until the date of this report, (December 5, 1918), the Commission has had no further session. It is understood that a number of Boys' Work Secretaries of the Young Men's Christian Associations are experimenting with the American Standard Program. The Sunday School Association continues to develop its policy and program through the camp-conferences and through older boys' and girls' conferences and councils. Many local schools are also conducting experiments in local four fold life programs. Ultimately, this valuable mass of data will be available for use in the construction of a scientific program through which the local worker may safely and effectively present the ideal of the Four Fold Life and may give the boy and girl a definite and workable plan for achieving and maintaining a balanced life.

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For the International Sunday School Association
Section of the Commission on Standard Program
of Boys' Work in America.

December 5, 1918.

